

March 29, 2017

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN SANTA ROSA COUNTY ADDRESSES COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS



Contact:

Debbie Stilphen, PIO
PIO.CHD57@flhealth.gov
850-983-5200, ext. 2275

Milton, Fla. — The Florida Department of Health in Santa Rosa County (DOH-Santa Rosa) recognizes the value in measuring health outcomes and today acknowledged the 2017 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps tool released by the University of Wisconsin and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This study highlights the many community factors that influence health and uses established data, much of which is available from the department at www.FLHealthCHARTS.com.

“We were pleased to learn that DOH-Santa Rosa had moved up in the rankings and we want to thank our community partners for their engagement and collaboration. Although we’ve made strides in some areas, we still have work to do in the areas of tobacco use and healthy lifestyles and will continue to work with our community partners on those issues,” said Sandra L. Park-O’Hara, DOH-Santa Rosa administrator.

These rankings are a snapshot of the health of counties across the country and they emphasize that health is not a singular effort but a combined work in progress across all community partners. The department works in collaboration with local governments, non-profit organizations, health care facilities, business groups, schools, faith-based organizations and many other stakeholders to improve the health of all people in Santa Rosa County. These rankings use data related to physical environments, social and economic factors, health behaviors and clinical care.

In Santa Rosa County, the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is designed to address specific opportunities for improved health that have been identified by the community. The department has partnered with many stakeholders to implement the CHIP and collaborates regularly to track progress.

Although the rate of adult smoking in Santa Rosa County remains higher than the state average, the DOH-Santa Rosa Tobacco Program is working with community partners to reduce the smoking rate by encouraging businesses and multi-unit housing complexes to adopt “smoke-free” policies. To date, 14 local businesses and 6 housing complexes have adopted such policies. Cessation assistance is available for those who want to quit. The health department, in conjunction with West Florida Area Health Education Centers (AHEC), offers free cessation classes. Additional resources are available on line at <http://tobaccofreeflorida.com/>.

To help reduce the rate of Type 2 Diabetes, DOH-Santa Rosa offers the National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP). The free program offers classes led by a trained lifestyle coach to help individuals at risk of developing diabetes make healthy food choices and lifestyle changes

that can delay, or prevent, the onset of Type II Diabetes. Santa Rosa's NDPP is the only one in Northwest Florida credentialed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

"The County Health Rankings are a valuable tool in helping to determine in what other areas we may need to focus our efforts for community health improvement," said Martha Zimmermann, executive director of the Healthy Start Coalition of Santa Rosa County. "It's gratifying to see that our efforts are making a difference in quality of life for our county's residents."

Last week the Florida Department of Health celebrated a one year milestone as the first integrated department of health in the nation to achieve national accreditation through the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#). Public health departments play a critical role in protecting and improving the health of people and communities. The seal of accreditation signifies that the Florida Department of Health has been rigorously examined and meets or exceeds national standards that promote continuous quality improvement for public health.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#) and on [Facebook](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.